of the Bye-pass (SH-12A) and the town of Jalpaiguri. Further, as the proposal involves Parliamentary Legislation it is not feasible to indicate the tentative time schedule for actual setting up the circuit bench.

Compulsory registration of marriages

1356. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Supreme Court has recently suggested to enact legislation for compulsory registration of marriages in the country to prevent menace of child marriage; and

(b) if so, the action taken for early legislation in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI P.C. THOMAS): (a) No such recent suggestion/decision of the Supreme Court has been brought to our notice.

(b) Question does not arise in view of reply to Part (a) above.

Photo Identity Cards

1357. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) whether photo identity cards have been issued in all the States;

(b) if not , the States where these cards have not been issued, so far; and

(c) by when the cards would be issued to all the citizens in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI P.C. THOMAS): (a) to (c) The Election Commission of India has informed that the programme of issuance of Elector's Photo Identity Cards (EPIC) to all the citizens, who have been enrolled in the electoral rolls, have been launched in all the States and Union Territories of the country. The scheme is based on the process of registration of electors, which is a continous process (excepting for a brief period between the last date for filing nomination and completion of election process). Therefore, the EPIC scheme is also necessarily a continuous programme, covering every new elector enrolled in the

electoral rolls in due course. Presently the national average of issuance of EPIC is 69.66%.

Modernisation of Major Ports

1358. SHRI RUMANDLA RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of SHIPPING be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that foreign core vessels prefer to use Colombo, Singapore or Dubai rather than Indian ports in view of clean ports and pollution free waters around the ports; and

(b) if so, the measures proposed to develop and modernize the major ports to attract growth in traffic?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING (SHRI DILIPKUMAR MANSUKHLAL GANDHI): (a) and (b) Development and modernisation of major ports is an on-going process keeping in view the demands of maritime trade. The premise that foreign core (mainline) vessels prefer to use Colombo, Singapore or Dubai rather than Indian ports in view of clean ports and pollution free waters around the ports is not correct. However, at present, Indian origin/bound container traffic is predominantly transhipped though ports in neighbouring countires which results in delays and raises transaction cost for India's international trade. In order to encourage direct shipment of cargo through Indian ports, it has been decided to develop a hub port each on the East and West coasts of India, at chennai and Jawaharal Nehru Ports, respectively. Further, it has been decided to develop an international container transhipment terminal at Vallarpadam, Cochin.

Guidelines for Ship Breaking

1359. SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of SHIPPING be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Supreme Court has recently given a significant ruling on dumping of hazardous wastes and formulation of guidelines for ship breaking;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and